

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2037

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 753

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, PINS

SUBJECT: CHILE -- HUMAN RIGHTS

REF: STATE 23898

1. SUMMARY: BASED ON AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATION WITH MININT BENAVIDES, WE SUGGEST POSSIBILITY OF STEPS WHICH MIGHT RESULT IN ADMISSION OF LIMITED NUMBER OF SELECTED CHILENAS INTO US. END SUMMARY.

2. WE ARE REPORTING SEPARATELY THE GIST OF MY FEB 3 CONVERSATION WITH MININT GEN BENAVIDES IN WHICH LATTER GAVE US ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE GOC WISHES TO PUSH FORWARD WITH PROGRAM FOR RELEASE OF DETAINEES INTO EXILE, BUT LITTLE INDICATION GOC YET APPRECIATES IMPORTANCE OF REIVING NORMAL LEGAL AND PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS FOR DETAINEES.

3. DURING MY JAN 29 CONVERSTATION WITH BENAVIDES I HAD RAISED QUESTION WHETHER GOC WOULD REACT NEGATIVELY IF USG SHOULD ADMIT A LIMITED NUMBER OF CHILEAN DETAINEES, OR OF CHILEAN REFUGEES IN ARGENTINA AND PERU. HE HAD NOT SEEMED CONCERNED AT THE THOUGHT, BUT WE WERE UNABLE TO PURSUE MATTER IN DETAIL.

4. AT FEB 3 MEETING, I RETURNED TO QUESTION BY ASKING HOW GOC WOULD FEEL IF USG, LIKE VARIOUS
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EUROPEAN AND LATIN AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS, SHOULD

INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT INDIVIDUAL DETAINEES--
FOR INSTANCE, PROFESSORS WITH JOB OFFERS IN US, OR
PROFESSIONALS SUCH AS DOCTORS WITH OPPORTUNITIES THERE.
SAID I WAS RAISING THIS QUESTION IN A PURELY PERSONAL
CAPACITY, SINCE I HAD NOT HAD OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS
IT IN WASHINGTON.

5. BENAVIDES INDICATED AGAIN THAT GOC WOULD HAVE NO
PROBLEM. HE POINTEDLY ASKED WHETHER SECRETARY'S VISIT
WAS STILL ON: WHAT SEEMS TO BE IN HIS MIND IS THOUGHT
THAT RELEASE OF A NUMBER OF CHILEAN DETAINEES FOR TRAVEL
TO US MIGHT BE POLITICALLY VALUABLE IN CONNECTION WITH
ATMOSPHERICS SURROUNDING SECRETARY'S TRIP, WHEN HE
MAKES IT.

6. COMMENT: AS RESULT THESE CONVERSATIONS WITH
BENAVIDES, I THINK IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO ADDRESS TWO
POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION. FIRST, DEPT MIGHT WISH TO
PUSH FORWARD WITH PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHING PAROLE
PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION OF CHILEANS CURRENTLY IN
OR OUTSIDE CHILE. SECOND, DEPT MIGHT WISH TO CONSIDER
SUGGESTING SHORT LIST OF NAMES OF INDIVIDUALS OF INTEREST
TO AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES OR OTHER SOURCES FOR RELEASE AS
"SPONTANEOUS" GESTURE BY GOVERNMENT OF CHILE, SAY
SHORTLY BEFORE SECRETARY ARRIVES IN COUNTRY. SUCH
INDIVIDUALS SHOULD OF COURSE BE ADMISSIBLE TO US.

7. THIS PROCEDURE WOULD AVOID THE KIND OF CRASS POLITICAL
OPPORTUNISM INDULGED IN BY MEXICAN FONMIN RABSA WHEN
HE VISITED CHILE LAST MAY TO BARGAIN FOR RELEASE OF
CHILEAN DETAINEES. IT WOULD ALSO AVOID ANY INFERENCE
THAT THE USG WAS EXERTING PRESSURE IN CHILE. AT SAME TIME,
IT COULD PROVIDE DEMONSTRATION OF WAY WHICH QUIET AND
DISCREET US REPRESENTATIVES RE HUMAN RIGHTS, OVER TIME,
HAD PRODUCED A BENEFICIAL, HUMANITARIAN RESULT. DEPT MAY
WISH TO EXAMINE CONGRESSIONAL AND OTHER ASPECTS OF THESE
GENERAL SUGGESTIONS.

8. IN CONNECTION WITH FOREGOING, WITHIN LAST FEW DAYS
HIGH MININT OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN SOUNDING OUT DATT WITH
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RESPECT TO POSSIBILITY OF FAIRLY DRAMATIC RELEASE OF, SAY,
UP TO 200 DETAINEES AROUND TIME OF SECRETARY'S VISIT TO CHILE,
AS MEANS OF DEMONSTRATING CHILEAN DESIRE TO IMPROVE ITS
IMAGE. SUGGESTION, HOWEVER, WAS NOT AT THAT TIME
LINKED TO POSSIBILITY OF DETAINEES' ADMISSION TO US.
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